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CBC Newsletter

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For members of the Carolina Bird Club, Inc., ornithological society of the Carolinas

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"Fall" Into Fun With the CBC in Wilmington!

How much fun can a hundred and fifty birders have during the peak of fall migration? Join members of the Carolina Bird Club as we find out when Wilmington, North Carolina hosts the 2008 edition of the fall meeting the weekend of October 3-5, 2008.

Early October can be excellent for passerine migrants, especially if an early fall cool front coincides with our meeting. Well known locations for migrants to linger include Federal Point at Ft. Fisher and Carolina Beach State Park, both on the "Pleasure Coast". Field trips are scheduled to these locations as well as other excellent birding spots including: Bald Head Island, Sunset Beach, Southport, Ft. Caswell, Oak Island, Airlee Gardens, Wrightsville Beach, Greenfield Lake, Holly Shelter W.M.A. and Poplar Grove Plantation. In addition to migrant songbirds, early October provides the possibility of migrating and arriving wintering shorebirds and waterfowl. Southeastern North Carolina's resident birds and specialties will make an appearance as well, and we will have opportunities to find and view species such as Wood Stork, and Red-cockaded Woodpecker. The planning committee is working on a boat trip up the Black River, a fun and different way to experience the Lower Cape Fear River's bird life. Also look for a macro-photography workshop and kayak trips.

We hope this whets your appetite for an exciting weekend of birding. The headquarters will be at the Holiday Inn, 5032 Market Street, Wilmington, NC. The phone number is 1-800-833-4721. Be sure to

mention the Carolina Bird Club meeting in order to receive the special rate of \$79 plus 13.75% tax. The rate includes a hot breakfast beginning at six o'clock and is good for Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. We are planning an excellent group buffet dinner for Saturday evening, look for more information and pricing in the August edition of the Newsletter or online at www.carolinabirdclub.org after mid-July.

The Wilmington area is a great place to bring non-birding spouses, significant others, and friends. From history to wide sandy beaches, trendy night spots to quaint boutique shopping, Wilmington has something for everyone. Military buffs may enjoy visiting the U.S.S. North Carolina battleship memorial to tour the "Showboat" and see how Navy sailors lived during World War II. Art and design fans will want to check out Bellamy Mansion, a beautiful example of antebellum architecture, while friends of the cool and coiled will no doubt enjoy a serpentarium devoted to the display and interpretation of our reptilian friends. Or maybe a haunted pub crawl or a ghost walk of the historic downtown area sounds like fun? Find out about these opportunities and more at www.wilmington.net

We hope you can join us for all the fun! Meeting registration information, field trip descriptions and the meeting schedule will be in the next edition of the Newsletter. See you in Wilmington!

Juanita Roushdy, Bruce Smithson, Ed Toone and John Ennis

Lake Conestee Nature Park (LCNP), Greenville, SC

"Discover A World Apart"

Paul Serridge



Introduction

Lake Conestee was initially formed when a dam was built across the Reedy River about 1815. Subsequent larger dams replaced the original one to produce power for a number of mills in Conestee. The present dam was built around 1892. At its maximum, the area of Lake Conestee was about 130 acres including two islands. Over the years the lake area has been dramatically reduced by the deposition of sediments by the Reedy River. The present-day lake area is only 20 to 25 acres, including some areas resulting from beaver activity. The large lake, which was once critical to local industry and a social and recreational centerpiece for a thriving community, is now a mosaic of forested bottomland, emergent wetlands, sloughs and much smaller lake remnants.

The non-profit Conestee Foundation acquired the lakebed property in 2001 and later expanded it by the purchase of adjoining tracts, notably the Henderson and Forester Farms. Although the silted-in lake was confirmed to contain a variety of contaminants from historical industrial activities in the watershed, the Conestee Foundation was able to show, via an exhaustive series of studies conducted with DHEC, that the area is safe for passive recreation, environmental education and wildlife. As a result of the bold vision of a handful of founders of the Conestee Foundation, and the continuing work of its board and other dedicated volunteers, this "lake that no one wanted" has been converted into a public nature park.

With help from the South Carolina Conservation Bank, the Greenville Community Foundation, Greenville County, the City of Greenville, and several private local foundations, the Foundation has acquired almost 400 acres of property for the Nature Park. The initial 2.3 miles of natural trails, boardwalks and a large observation deck were opened to the public in October 2006. Since then a 3/4 mile handicapped-accessible paved trail has been built.

Plans for 2008 include a footbridge over the Reedy River, new natural trails and a 1.7 mile paved trail with boardwalks that will lead around the lake to the

dam. Also, a Conestee Foundation website is in the final stages of preparation. Although only a few minutes drive from downtown Greenville, the Park's wildlife includes White-tailed Deer, Wild Turkey, beavers, river otters, both Grey and Red Foxes, several species of turtles and other reptiles.

The habitat is very varied: lake, pine and mixed deciduous forest, transitional meadow, the Reedy River, and extensive marshland (due in part to the energetic activity of the local beaver population). These varied habitats attract many different bird species, and at the time of writing (20 Jan 2008) 146 species have been reported.

Birding In The Park

The first time I heard about Lake Conestee Nature Park was during a Greenville County Bird Club (GCBC) outing in late 2006 when a club member handed out copies of a trail map of the newly opened park, saying that it was an interesting place for birds. An English birder on a business visit to Greenville had contacted the club and asked if anyone could take him birding locally. This seemed like a good opportunity to discover the Park, so my wife and I met him, found our way to the LCNP parking lot at the end of Henderson Avenue, and the three of us birded the trails for 3 hours. We reported only 25 species but our English visitor was delighted as he had 15 lifers!

On December 2, 2006 the GCBC made its first organized trip to Lake Conestee Nature Park. Twenty-five members participated as Jeff Beacham, the park's Executive Director, led the visit and explained the flora, fauna and history of the park. The group tallied 39 species, which was considered a pretty good count for a morning's birding in Greenville, SC in December. A couple of weeks later an American Bittern was sighted from the overlook near the dam in Conestee. That really put the Park on the birding map!

In January 2007 the GCBC started its regular bird trips to the park, which are held on the 3rd Saturday of each month so as not to conflict with the monthly bird trips of the Henderson County Bird Club.

Lake Conestee Nature Park (continued)



I have maintained detailed records of birds reported at the Park from GCBC trips, personal observations, and reports sent to me by other birders. Monthly updates of total species and species reported during each month are posted on the GCBC website under "Lake Conestee Nature Park" on the Projects page. (See <http://gcbirdclub.org/>) During 2007 the information was compiled from 118 separate reports. The following comments are based on a review of the updated monthly list:

- Nine duck species
- American Bittern was observed fairly regularly from Dec 2006 through May 2007, but it hasn't shown up again since. On two occasions two American Bitterns were seen, suggesting that a pair may have nested in the Park.
- An Anhinga in April was, perhaps, the most unexpected sighting during the year.
- A Great Egret was reported only once (in May).
- There were two reports of a Yellow-crowned Night Heron, one in May, the second in June (on a GCBC monthly trip).
- Raptors: two Red-shouldered Hawks are Park residents and have often been seen "up close", particularly from the overlook near the dam. Ospreys were reported during both migration seasons. There was only one report of both Broad-winged Hawk (April migrant) and American Kestrel (in September). Northern Harrier was reported only twice (April and November). There are two reports of Black Vulture, an uncommon sighting in the Greenville area.
- Wild Turkeys reside in the Park. There were 4 reported sightings in 2007. Unfortunately, there was only 1 report of a Bobwhite Quail (voice) in May.
- Shorebirds: the only plover reported was Killdeer. Groups of Wilson's Snipe (up to 8 individuals from January through April) and migrating shorebirds (April/May) were regularly seen from the overlook near the dam. Solitary and Spotted Sandpipers were also seen from the Observation Deck and along the Reedy River. No shorebirds were reported during the fall migration in 2007.
- Only 1 Gull species, Ring-billed, was reported,

a single sighting over the north lake in December. I find this surprising since gulls are regularly observed at other lakes in the area.

- A Barred Owl was reported most months but has not been seen or heard since October. Apart from one sighting of a Great Horned Owl, no other owls have been reported. The lack of a Screech Owl on the list is probably a result of no visits to the Park outside daylight hours.
- Yellow-billed Cuckoo was regularly heard and often seen from May through October. We are still waiting for the first report of a Black-billed Cuckoo.
- All 7 of the expected woodpecker species have been reported, although there are no reports of a Pileated Woodpecker since April.
- Six flycatchers have been reported. Eastern Phoebe is resident.
- Four vireo species have been reported.
- Thirty (yes, 30) warbler species have been reported in the Park. A notable absence is the Bay-breasted Warbler which has been reported in nearby Cleveland Park.
- Fish Crow is occasionally reported. In the absence of hearing a call, all crows are reported as American Crows by default.
- Both White-breasted and Brown-headed Nuthatches are Park residents. Surprisingly, despite reports from areas very close to Conestee, not a single Red-breasted Nuthatch has yet been reported in the Park (but "hope springs eternal").
- Eight sparrow species have been reported.
- Rose-breasted Grosbeaks have been reported regularly in spring and fall, and Blue Grosbeaks and Indigo Buntings during the summer.
- The single report of a male Painted Bunting was never independently verified, but I have included it in the list because the male bird is difficult to confuse with any other species.
- Rusty Blackbirds were regularly reported from December through April, at times in large flocks. A December 2007 report was of several hundred birds.

(continued on page 4)

Lake Conestee Nature Park (continued)



- Orchard Oriole was reported during the summer months but there is not a single report of a Baltimore Oriole. Again, this species is frequently seen in nearby Cleveland Park.
- There were only 3 reports of Purple Finch (November). House Finch and goldfinch are regularly reported. The only place where House Sparrows are reported is from the overlook area near the dam in the center of Conestee.



Conclusion

Lake Conestee Nature Park is truly a wonderful natural area in Greenville, SC and one of the best birding sites in the Upstate. It is featured as a South Carolina birding hot-spot on e-bird and on the CBC Wiki. Directions to the park and other information can be found there as well as on the GCBC website. The construction of new trails and the bridge over the Reedy River will open up more of the Park for birding and the list is expected to grow. A park checklist is in preparation for publication later in 2008. Enjoy your visits to Lake Conestee Nature Park and please send your observations to me at paulserridge@gcbirdclub.org.

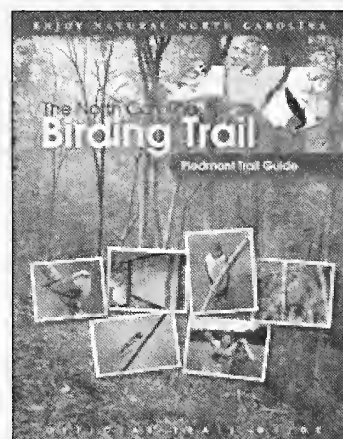
NC Birding Trail Piedmont Guide Available in June!

The NC Birding Trail reached a milestone May 15 when the Piedmont Trail Guide was unveiled at a release celebration in Raleigh. The second of three planned Trail Guides to cover the state, the Piedmont edition joins the previously released Coastal Plain Trail Guide. Each spiral bound guide includes color photos, detailed maps, site overviews, logistical information, and lists special interest species for each location. Birders can visit sites individually or string together numerous "birding drives" that take in multiple sites.

The 176-page Piedmont guide covers 103 sites from the fall line to the foothills (I-95 to I-77). The guide joins the 172-page Coastal Plain book, which highlights 102 sites along North Carolina's beautiful coast and coastal plain. Both books can be ordered at the discount price of \$10 per copy (shipping included)

through the NC Birding Trail website, which links directly to the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission's "NC Wild" online store. Watch for the Mountain region guide in 2009.

For more information on the NC Birding Trail, or to order a copy of either the Coastal Plain or Piedmont guides, visit www.ncbirdingtrail.org. The Piedmont guide will be ready to ship beginning in June.



New Members

Ann Anderson
Pilot Mountain, NC

Kelly Heath
Asheboro, NC

Kathleen Claspell
Linden, NC

Elaine Johnson
Hampton, GA

Matthew Daw
Raleigh, NC

Steve & Dianna
Kilpatrick
Beech Island, SC

Ricky Parker
Nancy Hefner
Conover, NC

Isabel Reddy
Durham, NC

Harry Shaw
Hamlet, NC

Songbird Services,
LLC
Holly Springs, NC

David Stebbing
Asheville, NC

Elizabeth Waters
Hillsborough, NC

Deceased Members

Paul DuMont

Tommy Wade



H. Douglas Pratt

CBC Bonus Trips: A Chance to Bird With Old Friends and Make New Ones in Fun Places Around the Carolinas and Beyond!

The CBC is pleased to announce several bonus field trips for 2008. Information on the out-of-state trip announced in the previous edition of the Newsletter is also listed. As always, contact the trip leaders for more information and to reserve your place on the trip. These offerings fill up fast, so act soon to avoid disappointment!

Peru - November 30-December 9, 2008

Ventures is offering a special trip to Peru (Abancay, Cuzco & Machu-Picchu) for CBC members. This Peru tour is a perfect short trip for an introduction to some of Peru's outstanding birds and scenic areas. We start with coastal birding in Lima, a visit to the famous Inca ruins of Machu-Picchu but also some very good sub-tropical, temperate cloud forest, as well as looking for some of the rarest birds on earth in the *Polylepis* woodlands. We also take in the Apurimac endemics near Cuzco, an area not on regular Peru birding itineraries. On this trip we stay at comfortable country inns throughout and all are convenient to the best birding spots. The food is very good and the people very friendly. If you have never been to South America before, this introductory tour to Peru will open your eyes to the beauty and diversity that is South America. With the recent publication of the new *Birds of Peru*, this is now an excellent time to visit this incredibly diverse country. Cost per person is **\$3,395 with single room supplement of \$495**. The cost includes: domestic flight back from Lima to Cusco and return, transportation throughout, all accommodation, meals (except where specified), entrance fees and gratuities (except for leader/guide), trip information packet & bird checklist, and guide/leader service throughout. Not included in the cost are: international flight to Lima, airport departure tax, alcoholic beverages, any meals not specified in the itinerary, laundry, and other items of a personal nature.

Maine- Puffins, boreal birds and spectacular scenery!

Join CBC member and globetrotting birding guide Simon Thompson from **July 11-19, 2008** on this very special Ventures, Inc. trip designed especially for the CBC. Maine is an outstanding birding destination, offering a variety of habitats that offer quite different birding opportunities from one another. From the waders and water birds of Scarborough Marsh near Portland, to Maine's fabled coast and Acadia National Park, to the boreal forest and blueberry barrens of easternmost Maine, you'll have a chance to explore "Down East". One of the highlights of our trip will undoubtedly be our boat ride to Machias Seal Island, site of breeding Atlantic Puffin and Arctic Tern colonies, where we will be able to spend time ashore getting close-up looks and photographs of these two species. We will also take a boat ride out of Bar Harbor to look for Atlantic Puffin, Roseate Tern, pelagic birds, and whales. Target species include: Spruce Grouse, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Three-toed & Black-backed Woodpeckers, Boreal Chickadee, Gray Jay, Atlantic Puffin, Black Guillemot, Razorbill, Arctic & Roseate Terns, Wilson's Storm-Petrel, Manx Shearwater, Black-legged Kittiwake, Common Loon, Common Eider, Magnolia, Bay-breasted & Blackpoll Warblers, Saltmarsh & Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows.

The cost of the Maine Venture is \$1975 *from Portland* based on double occupancy (Single supplement \$325). *Price includes:* Van transportation from Portland, accommodation, meals, boat trips, admission fees, information packet & bird checklist, and guide/leader service, plus a \$50 donation to the CBC. *Not included:* Airfare to Portland, alcoholic beverages, and items of a personal nature.

Reservations and prepayment are required on all Ventures. A \$200 deposit for the Maine trip (\$300 for Peru) is required to reserve your spot. Please make your check payable to VENTURES, Inc. and send it to the address below. MasterCard and Visa are also accepted. Each trip is limited to 10 participants. For more information, or to reserve your spot on this Ventures, Inc. trip, contact Simon Thompson at: Ventures, PO Box 1095, Skyland NC 28776. The phone is 828-253-4247. E-mail: travel@birdventures.com

CBC Presents Photo of Scott's Oriole

On March 5, 2008 I had the pleasure of presenting Danny and Becky Duggan with a framed photo of the first North Carolina record of Scott's Oriole that showed up in their back yard in Conover, NC. I did this on behalf of the Carolina Bird Club in appreciation of them allowing hundreds of birders from North and South Carolina, as well as other states, to come into their home to view the oriole. Harry Sell took the photo of the oriole, and CBC member Ann Miller, of Lenoir Framing, framed it. -*Dwayne Martin*



Results of the 2008 Election of Officers

The terms of several executive committee members expired this year. The nominating committee nominated, and the Club elected at the Southern Pines spring meeting, the following officers:

President (2nd of two 1-year terms)	Steve Patterson	Lancaster, SC
Eastern NC Vice President (1 three year term)	David McCloy	Pinehurst, NC
Secretary (2nd of three 1-year terms)	Pru Williams	Hope Mills, NC
Treasurer (1st of three 1-year terms)	Carol Bowman	Pinehurst, NC
Western NC Member-at-large (2nd term*)	Dwayne Martin	Hickory, NC
Eastern NC Member-at-large (2nd term*)	Lena Gallitano	Raleigh, NC
SC Member-at-large (2nd term*)	Linda Kolb	Seneca, SC

* at-large members serve two consecutive 2-year terms

What's In a Name?

Robert C. Gallagher quips: "Change is inevitable - except from a vending machine." This is certainly the case with common names for American birds (the change part anyway, I'm not sure most know how to operate a vending machine—though I did see a video where a pair of sparrows learned to use an automatic door opener at a big box store, but that is a story for later). A beginning birder might be excited to tell an old-timer about a beautiful Wood Stork they saw, only to have the elder mumble something about a "Wood Ibis" and how much better things were when a name was a name and gas was thirty-five cents a gallon.

Here is a list of now-obsolete names for some common North American birds. How many can you match with their current names? Look for the answers in a future edition of the Newsletter.

Marlin Hawk	Morellet Seedeater
Crying-bird	Mexican Woodpecker
Trilling Nighthawk	Canada Jay
Spanish Curlew	Olive-backed Kingbird
Crested Bittern	Black-masked Cuckoo
Pinewoods Sparrow	Pitiayumi Warbler
White-necked Raven	Clark's Crow
	Black Cap Flycatcher

The Gulls of Newfoundland

Tom Krakauer



Monday - January 14, 2008

We left the Battery Hotel about 8:15 in the morning and headed for Cape Spear. It was clear and cold-- a beautiful day--a little bit windy but not too bad. As soon as we got into the forest there were just innumerable finches and other birds. We ran into flocks totaling about 800 Bohemian Waxwings and about 25 Cedar Waxwings and about 200 White-winged Crossbills as well as steady groups of juncos. It was nice to get the good side-by-side comparisons of the two wax-wing species. Our first stop was at a little village called Blackhead where we drove up to an overlook; one of the most amusing things was to see a "Dalmatian snowman"... a small dog figure with some black spots. At Blackhead we saw our first seabirds. One of our target birds was Dovekie, a tiny little alcid. They are basically black and white. When they came up to the surface they splayed their wings until they were ready to dive again, when they tucked them in again. We saw a one male Red-breasted Merganser with a nice red breast. We also saw a Black Scoter that is probably the only one we're going to see on the trip.

We left Blackhead and went to Cape Spear. It being an exposed point, it was quite windy and very cold. I was glad to have all my layers of clothes including insulated boots and heavy wool socks, long johns, and snowboarding pants. It was delightful how warm the snowboard slacks were. The top layers were under-shirt, long johns, a wool shirt, and my heavy polar fleece jacket. My windbreaker topped it off. Protecting my head was my beard and I'm glad that I had the additional installation, but also a wool cap and the balaclava, so I was pretty comfortable.

We walked down close to the shore and saw maybe 200 Common Eider and had the first good introduction to both Glaucous Gulls and Iceland Gulls. We saw a number of great cormorants and Purple Sandpiper. We were hoping for some murre, but struck out.

Cape Spear is historically significant because it was the western end of Marconi's transatlantic cable. We left Cape Spear and went to a place called Maddox's Cove where we saw a Common Loon and a couple

more Dovekie. It was a nice little fishing village but it was being encroached upon by the population growth of St. John's. There was a subdivision being planned called Cape Spear Estates. Yuck!

We drove back to the St. John's about lunchtime, and I ate at a restaurant called Tim Horton's that is a cross between a Starbucks and Subway, with fast food with high test coffee. They are ubiquitous in the area around St. John's.

That first afternoon we went to Quidi Vidi Lake, which is famous for its gulls in winter. We ended up seeing 10 gulls for the day. Thousands of gulls were there on the ice and in the open pools. Towards the end of the day, we saw one of the target birds--an adult Yellow-legged Gull from the Azores. It doesn't get to Newfoundland very often. It is an elegant bird, a fairly large gull similar to a Herring Gull. It is a little bit darker than the Herring Gull and less dark than a Great Black-backed Gull.

Towards the end of the afternoon it started clouding up. We had been warned that there was a snowstorm coming. In fact, by Tuesday morning we had six or 7 inches-- pretty much slushy because the temperature was right around freezing.

Monday evening we ate dinner in downtown St. John's at a seafood restaurant and had a really nice baked cod. I'm afraid I'll not get the lobster that I was always hoping for, but since I got lobster a couple of times on Monhegan Island this summer. I guess I will survive.

Tuesday - January 15, 2008

Since Jim's luggage was lost somewhere in airline purgatory, we drove to a Wal-Mart where Jim did some shopping and we did feeder birding. There were goodies such as Pine Warbler and Bullock's Oriole. It didn't excite me too much that we were looking at transplants from the southern U.S., as opposed to the northern birds that I was hoping to see. The weather just didn't permit that. When we got back to the hotel around one o'clock, Jim's luggage had arrived.

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The Gulls of Newfoundland (continued)



About 3:15 we went back out to Quidi Vidi Lake, and I did pretty well on the gulls with the exception of what I think is most difficult-- identifying the first year, or first cycle, Lesser Black-backed Gull. It is primarily differentiable from Great Black-backed by the banding on the tail. I think I'll go to my death not being confident about first cycle black-backed gulls. We estimated that there were about 5,000 gulls sitting (sleeping) on the ice and in the patches of open water—primarily Great Black-backed Gulls, Iceland Gulls, a few Glaucous and Herring Gulls.

Tuesday night we went to a delicious Thai restaurant and had a nice meal. We ordered a number of entrées and shared them around.

Wednesday - January 16, 2008

Our first stop was a small pond next to St. John's Hospital where there were a number of gulls and both Eurasian and American Wigeon. One of the most interesting things there was a gull that Jon [Dunn] spotted and looked at very carefully. He thought it was a hybrid, took some pictures, and described it to Bruce MacTavish, who is the birding and gull expert in St. John's. It turns out that the bird we were looking at was a second-year Yellow-legged Gull. If Jon didn't recognize it as being a Yellow-legged Gull, I don't stand a chance of really being able to master all of the intricacies of gull plumages. It is tribute to Jon's expertise that he recognized the subtle indications that he was looking at something different and that he was puzzled by it. It turns out that Bruce had to send a picture of the gull to Europe and it was then forwarded to people in the Azores who were experts on this particular subspecies before it was identified.

Next stop was the Fluvarium, which is an aquarium adjacent to Long Pond. The bathroom was very welcome. We walked out through some really nice spruce-fir forests. It was very quiet and we were hoping to find a Black-backed Woodpecker, but we didn't. We did see Red-breasted Nuthatch, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and a number of Black-capped Chickadees. I was amazed when I saw a crane fly alive and moving on the snow. Eventually it flew away. I hadn't known that crane flies were active in winter.

We went to the hotel to get lunch and then went back

out. It was snowy and windy and nasty so we didn't go back up to Cape Spear but went along the north shore, still pretty close to St. John's, where we saw enormous flocks of White-winged Crossbills. We stopped along the side of the road and watched the crossbills feeding. It was neat to see them cutting a spruce cone off a tree and then cradle the cone on the bough before beginning to feed. This took me by surprise because I had observed Red Crossbills feeding, and they extracted seeds from hanging cones. Some White-winged Crossbills did feed from hanging cones. By this time it had gotten colder and windier. We drove down to the sea. It was so windy that the snow was blowing horizontally and actually stung when it hit ones face. We saw a flock of Robins in somebody's yard that were eating mountain ash berries. No Red-wing, darn.

We then spent some time at the house of some birders (Ken and his wife) that Jon knew. They provided a welcome fire and hot coffee and tea. We enjoyed sitting there and saw a Boreal Chickadee coming to their feeder with bunches of juncos. A Bald Eagle flew across the backyard as did a goshawk. At the end of the day a Fox Sparrow came to the feeder. A pretty nice day! I think the highlight for me was the opportunity to walk through the spruce forests and then to see the feeding behavior of the crossbills. At 6:30 we went out to dinner with Bruce MacTavish where we enjoy a restaurant that specializes in serving wild game. I had a yummy lamb chop and a delicious local beer—1892.

Thursday - January 17, 2008

It's a windy day with some snow flurries. We pretty much just stayed around St. John's. First thing this morning we saw a Red Crossbill, a species we haven't seen yet, eating larch seeds. I think it is different "species" from the one that we have in North Carolina. Then we went to a different feeder and saw a Baltimore Oriole. At the two feeders we also saw lots of Evening Grosbeak and Pine Siskin. It was nice to see some local feeder birds as well as the oddities. For us to see two species of orioles in Newfoundland in the middle of winter is pretty amazing. We then made a quick stop at the hospital pond and then went on to the Fluvarium.

The Gulls of Newfoundland (continued)

We walked down the path in the hopes of hearing or seeing a Black-backed Woodpecker and were unsuccessful, although one was seen just before we arrived. We then came back to the hospital pond where we saw the adult Yellow-legged Gull. It gave us good looks but then decided to take a nap. I was pleased to see both male and female Eurasian Wigeon at close range. Elegant! After lunch we headed back to Cape Spear. Got great looks at Pine Grosbeak! We went back to Quidi Vidi Lake, but everyone was punch drunk and not focused on gulls. Dinner Chinese.

Tomorrow will be riding south on the Avalon Peninsula looking for different gulls and land birds. It should be a beautiful day, but it will be a long day. We won't get back from Cape Race before about 8:00 p.m. We will then have the departure dinner, and I'll have to take a cab to the airport at about 3:30 for my 5:00 a.m. flight.

Friday, January 18

It was a beautiful sunny day that dawned about -3 Celsius, with light south westerly winds. All-in-all a very, very pleasant day. This is the last day of the trip. We started off and went to Cape Broyle, Ferryland, Renew, and ended up at Portugal Cove South before heading to Cape Race itself. At Ferryland we were treated to both Common and Hoary Redpolls. It was wonderful to see side-by-side comparisons of the very pale hoary and the more streaked common. At Renew, we got to see a catch of cod drying on a clothes line. Once we passed Cappahayden, we went away from the shore and the habitat changed dramatically. The landscape changed from spruce-fir forest to snow-covered tundra. We came across a herd of ten Caribou which crossed the road right in front of the van. It was nice to see them in their white winter garb. No antlers. Their feet look like snowshoes. We continued on to Portugal Cove South and set up the scopes. There were Common Murre, Razorbills and a large number of Dovekie right along the shoreline. There was a Red-throated Loon as well as a Common Loon. We were then greeted by the Shepherds and were invited to their house for lunch and to look at their feeder birds. Dave Shepherd and Julie Kappelman live at Portugal Cove South and operate a B&B. It was nice to warm up and see a flock of about seventy Snow Buntings. I've seen Snow Buntings in summer

when they are paired up and pretty flighty. It was fun to see them in winter, flocked-up, and be able to make the comparisons between adult females, and first year birds. The bathroom break was very welcome!

After lunch we then headed on out to the tip of Cape Race. We had a cameo appearance, and I mean cameo appearance, of a Northern Shrike, distant views of Red-necked Grebe, a quick view of a Bald Eagle, and then went out to stand under the still-functioning lighthouse where we saw a distant view of a Black-legged Kittiwake. There were large flocks of Common Eider, and White-winged Scoter. I saw one very barrel-chested alcid flying by. I am not sure whether it was Razorbill or a Thick-billed Murre--probably was Razorbill, because I really didn't see a bill projecting out much beyond the head.

The day came to wonderful close as the sun was setting. A large, very dark peregrine (juvenile) flew by at close range. It came by and circled past the lighthouse and then headed off into the sun. Just a few minutes later we had an extended view of an elegant Short-eared Owl that cruised for several minutes just over the tundra. We didn't see it catch anything, but it dropped to the ground twice.

In Conclusion:

It was an interesting field trip. We saw a lot of interesting birds and tallied 82 species. I got one lifer, the Yellow-legged Gull. The highlight for me was to see the large flocks of Bohemian Waxwings and to spend time looking at the feeding behavior of the crossbills. It goes without saying that backyard birders do not choose to go to Newfoundland in January. The skill level of the group was enormous. It was great to be with Jon Dunn with his encyclopedic knowledge of birds and bird records and his equally encyclopedic knowledge of movies and movie stars. Conversations at meals were a delight. We certainly did not lack for good food and good restaurants in St. John's. The Battery Hotel is a little down-in-the-mouth but they advertise it as being the place where there is a "million-dollar view." The view up St. John's Harbor certainly was spectacular.





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